St. Bridget Parish Council
Thursday, Jan. 8, 2009

President Andrea McCormick called the meeting to order at 7:01.

Opening prayer was offered by Marnell Stover.

Roll call: Present: Fr. Fador, Andrea McCormick, Peg Kearns, Gerry Cunningham, Marnell Stover, Rick Stover, Pat Beecher, Rose Frith, Audrey Cunningham, Louise Riley, Doug Landy, Rosemarie Frick, Walt Kearns, Mel Harmon, and 4 parish members.
Not Present: Deacon Stephen Beecher

Approval of Dec. minutes: After a change made in the wording for the Hospitality committee and Social Action committee, a motion was made by Gerry to accept the minutes as amended, seconded by Walt. Motion carried.

Approval of updated by-laws: The council reviewed the by-laws, there was no discussion, and a motion was made by Peg to accept the by-laws as revised, seconded by Audrey. Motion carried.

Presentation by Pat Conroy: Pat reviewed the happenings over the past couple of years in the restoration process as she recalled and gave a handout of summaries for the parish council to read. She emphasized that the next step in the HPTAG grant is to choose a final technical assistance project soon so a report can be given to the CT Trust for Historic Preservation by the due date in April.

Committee Reports:

a. **Religious Education** – Marnell reported that classes are proceeding, students are coming prepared, Lenten projects have been chosen and started. There are 4 candidates for the sacrament of Reconciliation and 4 for First Holy Communion.
b. **Liturgy** - Rosemarie has looked into the purchase of large outdoor nativity figurines for St. Bridget for next year. She stated that her husband has volunteered to build a stable, or such, for a setting for the figures. She is still working on this project.
c. **Social Action** – Louise had no formal report but had some ideas to present. How do we survey the parishioners to find out who can use help? The council felt we should start by word of mouth to see who could use a phone call or a meal. Would a clothing swap be something to try? Soup & share time, and a St. Bridget newsletter, are also some thoughts. The council felt putting St. Bridget news in The Cornwall Chronicle would be a great start since that is a publication that already goes out. If that goes well perhaps it could be expanded to other town publications.

d. **Planning & Development** – Walt thinks that we need more greeters. An announcement at mass appealing for more will be made. Walt will meet with Rick and Fr. Fador to decide the next step for the renovation project.
e. **Hospitality** – Audrey plans to start up the "coffee and" get together after Sunday morning mass soon and will coordinate days with the Religious Education classes. Pot Luck suppers are on hold until the weather improves. During Lent we may do a simple soup/bread supper before the Stations of the Cross.
f. **Spiritual Life** – This committee is on hold for the time being.
g. **Communications** – no report
h. **Special Events** – Rose has some ideas which she would like to talk over with Fr. Fador then present to the rest of the council.

Pastor's Report: Fr. Fador's mission this year is to increase attendance at masses and he invites all of us to accept this mission as our own. Love is the answer, which means being welcoming, open, hospitable, available, for all our parishioners and the community. One never knows when a loving act can help someone become closer to God, and perhaps return or begin to attend church. We need to pray about this and let Fr. know if we will help him in this. The annual appeal actually put us in the black by a few hundred dollars for the end of the year. Fr. and Rick are preparing the financial report.
The new tables and chairs for the church hall have come in. The rug squares are also in and will be put down soon in the storage room of the church hall. The Liturgy Committee will have a storage rack to the left of the door, and the kitchen will have a storage rack on the right.

Old Business: We will address the Spiritual Life committee another time. Perhaps we don't need this as a committee right now.
Pat Beecher asked about the $50,000.00 which was donated specifically for handicap access to the church. Fr. Fador assured the council that the money lies untouched and waiting for a future opportunity to be used for that project, which is not feasible at this point in time.

New Business: Gerry feels that we need a recruiter to help find more people to be greeters. A protocol needs to be in place for all the lay positions.

The council discussed the renovation committee report presented this evening. Restoration has a different meaning than renovation. Rick will meet with Walt and they will meet with Pat Conroy to decide next directions and to clarify the grant that is in place and possible new grant money.
Rick stated that he feels we should focus on one primary objective. We need to reach out to parishioners – how can we do that? Strategic planning for churches is available. How is our website? Fr. Fador's message is unique and we should amplify it. Think what should be on our website since it needs to be updated.

Next Parish Council meeting will be **Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009**.

Closing prayer was offered by Doug.

A motion to adjourn was made by Rose at 9:17, seconded by Peg. Motion carried.

Submitted by Mary Ellen Harmon